

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4006

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR ECIN MR SG

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SENGHOR VISITS MAURITANIA

1. FOLLOWING WEEKEND VISIT TO MAURITANIA, PRESIDENT SENGHOR HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN NOUAKCHOTT JUNE 22 WHERE HE DISCUSSED MAURITANIAN-SENEGAL FRONTIER, SENEGL RIVER DEVELOPMENT VPANIZATION (OMVS), AND COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST (CEDEAO).

2. MAURITANIAN-SENEGAL BORDER. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, SENGHOR SAID TALKS WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAAH DEALT WITH PROBLEM ON FRONTIER. AS FAR AS OUR COUNTRIES ARE CONCERNED, HE NOTED, IT IS THEORETICAL PROBLEM BECAUSE TREATY CREATING OMVS INTERNATIONALIZES THE SENEGL RIVER FROM THE MANATALI DAM TO THE SEA (DAKAR 3549). CONSEQUENTLY, PROBLEM IS OVERCOME. WHEN ASKED ABOUT RECENT VISIT TO DAKAR BY MAURITANIAN INTERIOR MINISTER (DAKAR 3406), SENGHOR SAID HE WAS MOST SATISFIED WITH RESULTS. NOTING THAT BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE RELATIVES ON OTHER SIDE OF BORDER, SENGHOR

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SAID WE MUST LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE ADDED, SENEGALESE AND MAURITANIAN NATIONALS ARE NOT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THIS NECESSITY NOR OF THE LAW. WITHOUT KNOWING IT, BOTH SIDES HAVE BROKEN THE LAW. BUT ESSENTIAL POINT, HE CONCLUDED, IS TO MAINTAIN POLITICAL WILLINGNESS AND CONTINUE TO COOPERATE AND MULTIPLY CONTACTS BETWEEN OUR PRINCIPAL MINISTERS.

3. OMVS. SENGHOR SAID DECISIONS WERE MADE IN NOUAKCHOTT WITH VIEW TOWARDS GIVING OMVS A NEW LIFE. ANOTHER SERIES OF MEETINGS FOR THIS PURPOSE WAS AGREED UPON (NOUAKCHOTT 1252). IN JULY, OMVS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL MEET IN NOUAKCHOTT. IN MID-OCTOBER THERE WILL BE MEETING OF OMVS DONORS WHICH SENGHOR SAID HE WOULD OPEN IN HIS CAPACITY AS OMVS PRESIDENT. AFTERWARDS, OMVS CHIEFS OF STATE WILL MEET AT WHICH TIME DECISIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO GIVE OMVS SECOND WIND. SENGHOR ADDED THAT FEASIBILITY STUDIES WILL BE COMPLETED NEXT YEAR AND "WE CAN BEGIN TO PLACE THE FIRST STONES OF THE DAMU IN 1976".

4. CEDEAO. SENGHOR DEFENDED SUB-REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS AS FIRST STEP TOWARDS AFRICAN UNITY. THEREFORE, SIX MEMBER COUNTRIES OF COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST (CEAO) ATTENDED LAGOS MEETING WHICH ESTABLISHED CEDEAO. SENGHOR ADDED THAT WHEN THE PROTOCOLS ARE DRAWN UP, SENEGAL WILL RATIFY THEM. HE CONCLUDED THAT SENEGAL ATTACHES "GREAT IMPORTANCE TO SUB-REGIONAL GROUPS, MORE PRECISELY TO SUB-REGIONAL SOLIDARITY."

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH FRIENDLY PLATITUDES ON BORDER PROBLEM WILL HELP TO SMOOTH RUFFLED FEATHERS, SENGHOR OFFERED NO SPECIFICS ON WHAT IS BEING DONE TO AMELIORATE SITUATION. THESE BORDER DIFFICULTIES ARE ESSENTIALLY LOCAL IN ORIGIN BUT THEY ARE ALSO SYMPTOMATIC OF DEEP SEATED DIVISIONS INVOLVING A MOORISH DOMINATED GOVERNMENT IN A COUNTRY HAVING A LARGE AFRICAN POPULATION IN THE SOUTH. SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY A NEIGHBOR TO SOUTH WHICH IS ALMOST ENTIRELY AFRICAN IN COMPOSITION. MOORS IN MAURITANIA SET ON AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS IN SOUTH ONLY BECAUSE INTELLECTUALLY THEY REALIZE THEY SHOULD AND POLITICALLY THEY MUST. SENGHOR, ON OTHER HAND, SEES HIMSELF AS PROTECTOR OF AFRICANS ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER (NOUAKCHOTT 1244). ALTHOUGH WE APPRECIATE THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIMILAR ETHNIC PROBLEMS ARE FOUND ALONG FRONTIERS THROUGHOUT AFRICA, WE DO NOT SEE ANY QUICK SOLUTION TO THIS PARTICULAR SITUATION.HANDYSIDE

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